

The Importance of the Nile



The Nile River was the ancient Egyptians' best friend, even if it did flood every year.

Every year, in the fall, the great river would overflow its banks. At first, the Egyptians lost their crops, their houses, and (in some cases) their lives. But the Egyptian people noticed after a time that the floods came about the same time every year, in June. So they planned ahead.

They would make sure nothing important was on the banks of the river when it was time for the floods. Then, after the water level went back down, they would quickly plant new crops. The floods brought good, fresh soil up onto the land. This soil was ideal for planting barley and other grains.

The river also gave them a chance to catch many fish. The Egyptians would build boats out of wood or papyrus and sail up and down the river. They would use spears and nets to catch fish. They would also use nets to catch birds that flew close to the surface of the water.



The Nile also provided protection from attack. People wanting to invade Egypt would have to first cross the river, which was very wide in places. The Egyptians could stand on their own side of the river and throw spears at their attackers. Any attacker who did cross the river was likely to be tired from making the crossing.

Another important way that the Nile helped the ancient Egyptians was in trade. Goods went to and from Egypt down and up the Nile, which had its mouth at the Mediterranean Sea.